

REMARKS

The present amendment is respectfully submitted in response to the Office Action of October 5, 2004 on the above-identified application. Entry of the preceding amendments to the specification and claims are respectfully requested.

At the outset, there appears to be some confusion about which claims are pending in the application. Referring to the Office Action Summary (Form PTOL-326), claims 1 through 17 are pending in the application. Of these, claims 6 through 9, 13, 14 and 17 are indicated as having been withdrawn from consideration. This accords with the Applicants' response filed on August 16, 2004. However, claims 1 through 7 and 10 through 17 are indicated as being rejected, including claims previously indicated as having been withdrawn. In preparing the remarks to follow, the undersigned has assumed that claims 1 through 7 and 10 through 17 are currently before the Examiner, and that claims 8 and 9 are currently withdrawn.

Turning now to page 2 of the action, in paragraph 2, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) as failing to show a rib in Figures 16 and 17, indicating that reference number 90' seems to be pointing to sleeve 60 in those figures.

Attached hereto are replacement sheets for those sheets which include Figure 16, 17 and 19, all of which show the rib 90' in question. In these replacement sheets, rib 90' has been indicated with a bolder line to ensure its visibility. Annotated Marked-up drawings are also enclosed to show the change being made more clearly.

In paragraph 3 on page 3, the disclosure was objected to for its use of the word "adjacent". This word has been changed to "near" in both the paragraph indicated by the Examiner and in the Abstract.

Claims 4 through 7 and 10 through 17 were rejected for formal reasons under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Although claim 4 is being cancelled, as will be noted below, the remaining claims have been amended as suggested by the Examiner.


Claims 1 through 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable for obviousness over Huang (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0228930) in view of Onions (U.S. Patent No. 3,311,375). Claims 1 through 4 have been cancelled above to render these rejections moot.

The Applicants note with appreciation that claims 5 through 7, 10, 11 and 12 through 17 would be allowable if amended to overcome the formal rejections and to place them into independent form. This has been done in the preceding amendments.

Finally, claims 8 and 9, although indicated as being withdrawn, have also been amended. Claim 8 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 5, and claim 9 has been amended to remove a possible indefiniteness. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested, as is a return of claims 8 and 9 into the application.

An early allowance of claims 5 through 17 is respectfully requested and earnestly sought.

Respectfully submitted,



John F. Gulbin
Registration No. 33,180

212.297.5800
Pitney Hardin LLP
7 Times Square
New York, NY 10036-7311

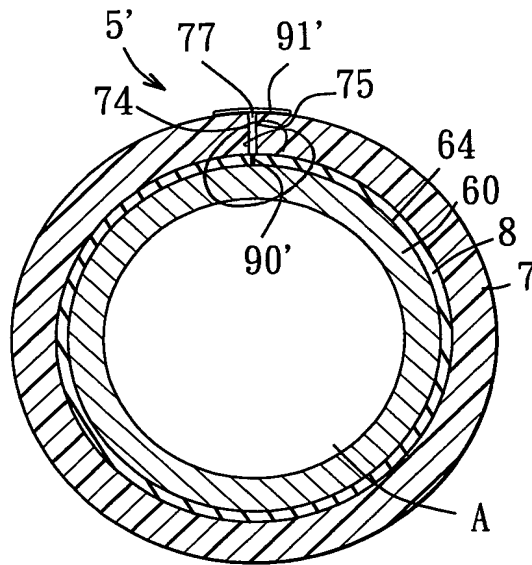


FIG. 16

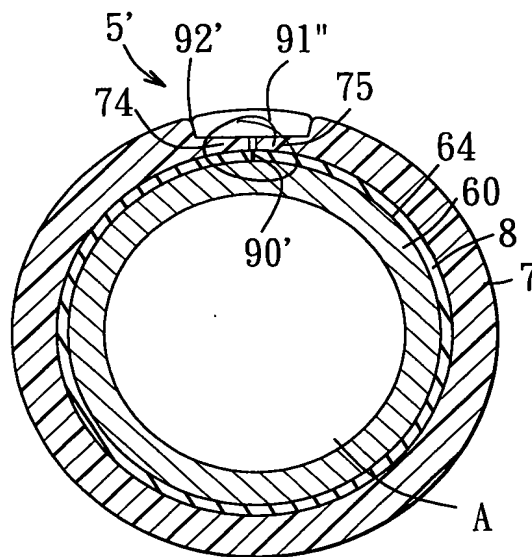


FIG. 17

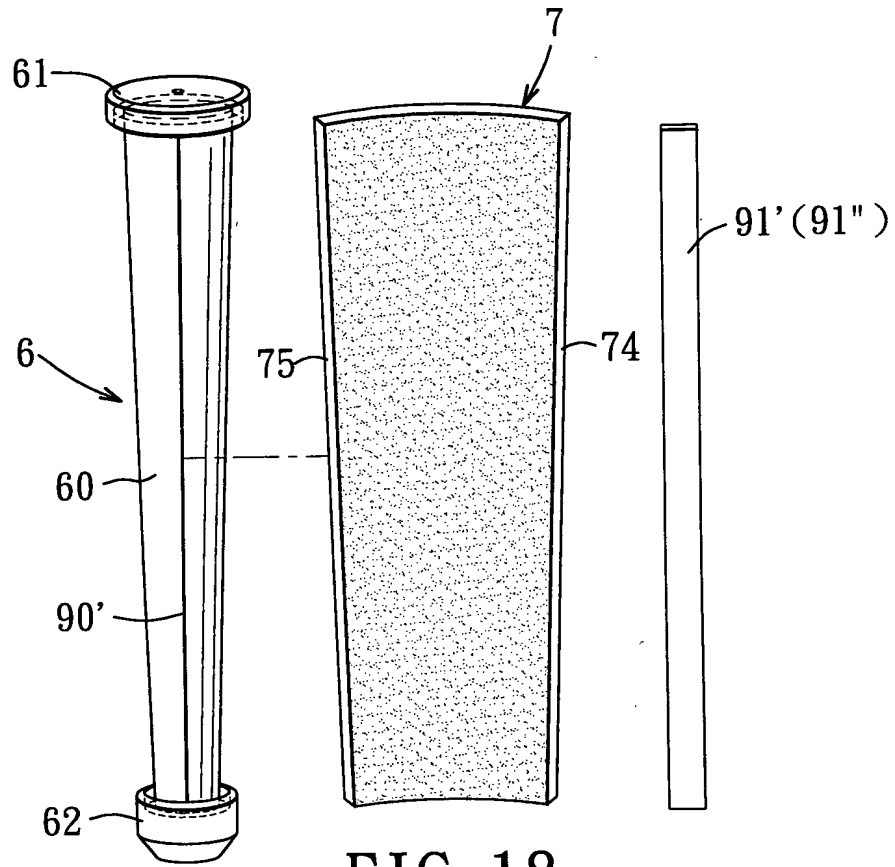


FIG. 18

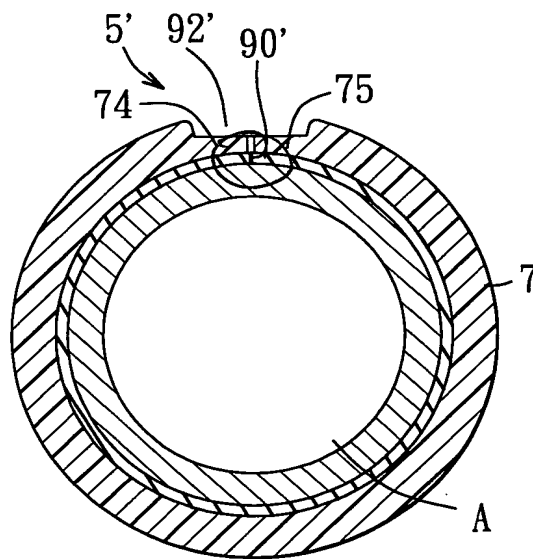


FIG. 19